



The Old Ironsides Report

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1AD Units Work to Improve Baghdad Colleges

Story by Spc. Chad D. Wilkerson
372nd MPAD

BAGHDAD, Iraq – Soldiers from the 1st Armored Division's 16th Engineer Battalion, have spent the past few weeks rebuilding and resupplying Baghdad's higher-learning institutions.

Baghdad's universities were in dire need of repair after looters and thieves stripped every building of everything, from electrical wires to plumbing fixtures.

"We have been working the last 40 days doing emergency repairs and maintenance on at the Women's College of Islamic Studies at the Bab-Al Muadam campus of Baghdad University," said Lt. Col. John Kem, 16th Engineer Bn. commander. "The whole place was completely looted, but we got power restored, installed fans, and we repaired or replaced essentials in 250 classrooms."

Kem and his soldiers have deadlines to meet for different events in the university's school year, and new ones are coming up.

"We worked hard to get them ready for exams that started on 12 July," said Kem. "The next step is to get further upgrades for classes that start at the end of September."

The items and repairs that the 16th Engineers have been able to provide cover a wide range of needs, but they are all focused toward the same goal, he said.

"We gave them five photocopy machines for each college, different furniture, air conditioning units, replaced the window glass and fixed their electrical generators," said Spc. Justin Blackburn, combat engineer with 16th Engineers.

"We fixed up the kitchens and the wiring. Today we are bringing in mattresses and pillows for the 350 Iraqi female students who will be staying one of the dorms," Kem said.

Kem meets with school staff once a week to discuss repair progress and the next course of action on campus.

U.S. soldiers on the campuses say they enjoy this type of work, said Kem. They enjoy it not only for the change of pace it provides, but also because of something inside that is truly American.

"Americans like to help people," Kem said. "We are a blessed and fortunate country, and we like to give others the same opportunities. It really is part of our history and our heritage."

The work that the engineers are doing is not limited to building materials, furnishings and office supplies, but rather an investment in the future of Iraq, Kem said.

"The Iraqi people have been stifled in the past in their intellectual and academic freedoms," said Kem. "To really move forward they must have these freedoms because these young people are the leaders of the future. We want this country to move forward and make transitions, and these are the people who are going to do it."



Pfc. Jerry Szymczyk, 32, from Eatontown, N.J., with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 16th Engineer Battalion, 1st Armored Division, helps carry new mattresses and pillows into a five-story dormitory, where 350 women live at the Women's College of Islamic Studies at a Baghdad University campus located in the heart of Baghdad.

Photo by Sgt. Mark E. Bell, 372nd MPAD

A Smart Tip From 1AD Safety

Convoy Commanders Will Ensure Recovery Procedures are Briefed to All Personnel

- Provide Security
- Ensure Personnel are not Exposed to Traffic
- Stay on Paved Sections of Roads
- Ensure Hazard Warning Lights are Turned on
- Place Warning Triangle to Warn On-Coming Traffic
- Guards Will Wear Reflective Vest/Belts
- Convoy Commander Will Notify Higher HQs and Report:

Location, Type of Vehicle Involved
Assistance Required or Self Recovery
Being Attempted

NEWS

Study: 9/11-Style Attack on U.S. Likely

LONDON (AP) - Another Sept. 11-style terrorism attack is "highly likely" in the United States, which ranks fourth in an index assessing the risk to 186 countries, a research company said Sunday. The London-based World Markets Research Center ranked Colombia, Israel, Pakistan, the United States and the Philippines, in descending order, as the five countries most likely to be targeted in a terrorist attack in the next 12 months, Guy Dunn, author of the company's World Terrorism Index, said in a telephone interview.

Troop Pullout Deal Aids Mideast Peace Bid

JERUSALEM (AP) - The turnaround was unexpected, even for a conflict already packed with drama. Just hours after renewed Palestinian bombings and deadly Israeli raids appeared to doom an international peace plan, the two sides this weekend negotiated a West Bank troop pullback. Both sides acted quickly apparently to avoid being blamed for the breakdown of the most ambitious U.S. peace initiative in the region in three years, the "road map" to peace and Palestinian statehood by 2005.

22 Die As Insurgents Battle Afghan Police

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) - Hundreds of insurgents in a convoy of trucks attacked a police headquarters in southeastern Afghanistan, triggering a gunbattle Sunday that killed 22 people, officials said. It was one of the largest shows of anti-government force in over a year. The fierce fighting in Paktika province was the latest in a wave of violence that has underscored just how unstable Afghanistan remains after U.S.-led forces toppled the Taliban in late 2001.

Chaplain's Thought for the Day

Grounded

Roots nourish, give us life and bind us safely to earth. Plant them well.

--Anonymous

All trees have different root systems. The pine grows quickly, with shallow roots that spread in every direction. A maple is a slow-growing tree, whose roots run deeper, seeking out moisture far into the earth. Both root systems give life, but when the weather turns stormy and the wind howls through the branches, the maple, with its deeper roots, will hold fast. The permanent things in life take time to develop. If we want our relationships, our skills, our accomplishments, to resist the storms we all encounter, we must allow time for them to grow and deepen within us, and marvel, in the meantime, at how much we can learn from the world and the people around us.

What deep roots are you setting down right now? Are you rooted and grounded in God and his word?

SPORTS

U.S. Basketball Downs Puerto Rico 101-74

NEW YORK (AP) - Tim Duncan had 21 points and 15 rebounds and the United States broke open a semi-close game with a 10-0 fourth-quarter run to defeat Puerto Rico 101-74 in an exhibition game Sunday. It was the only tuneup for the Americans before beginning play Wednesday night at the Olympic qualifying tournament in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Oddly Enough

Tight-Jeans Contest Canceled in Idaho

SANDPOINT, Idaho (AP) -- Bonner County Fair organizers are saying if the jeans don't quite fit, don't wear them. Or at least don't expect a prize. Fair officials have canceled plans for a tight-fitting jeans contest because of community complaints. "Some ladies in the community think that it's inappropriate," fair manager Rhonda Livingston said. Opponents of the tight-fitting jeans contest took their complaints to county commissioners, who deferred to the Bonner County Fair Board. The women were worried the contest would exploit those who competed for the most painted-on pair of jeans, Livingston said. Though the contest is sponsored by Wrangler - and uses no tax dollars - Livingston said the event was canceled to keep the peace. "I don't want people coming to the fair with negative attitudes. I don't want people to be unhappy; the fair is supposed to be fun," Livingston said.

This Day in History

August 18th, 1864

Union General Ulysses S. Grant tries to cut a vital Confederate lifeline into Petersburg, Virginia, with an attack on the Weldon Railroad. On August 18, Grant attacked with General Gouverneur K. Warren's corps and succeeded in capturing part of the line. In a battle that raged for the next five days, the Confederates tried to recapture the line, but the Yankees remained in control. Despite control over this area, the Union did not prevent the Weldon line from supplying Lee's army. The Confederates simply stopped their trains one day south of Petersburg and used wagons to haul the cargo around the break. On August 25, a Confederate offensive would return control of the railroad to the Rebels.